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ABSTRACT

This report examines results of a review commissioned by the New Zealand Ministry of Education of criteria for determining special education placements. It proposes a model which focuses on eligibility standards for five levels of educational support for New Zealand students with special educational needs arising from their special physical, sensory, learning, or behavioral characteristics. The term "students with education support needs" is defined and quality of life is asserted to be the appropriate goal in allocating resources. Types of educational support are listed along with factors to be considered in determining education supports. The development of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and Needs Ascertainment Agreements (NAAs) is addressed, including principles to follow and important differences between NAAs and IEPs. Distinctions among the five broad levels of education support needs are explained. These range from Level 1 needs, which the classroom teacher should normally be able to accommodate, to Level 5 needs, which require extensive modification to regular curriculum content, teaching methods, and placement. A matrix displays the five levels in 10 behavioral domains. Examples of students with Level 5 needs arising from learning difficulties, physical disabilities, or behavior difficulties are given. (DB)

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Students With Education Support Needs: A New Approach To Resourcing

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Abstract

The New Zealand Ministry of Education recently commissioned a review of criteria for determining special education placements and resourcing. This review focused on how to ascertain students' eligibility for one of five levels of education supports. The authors, who co-directed the review, will outline the main recommendations and the subsequent policy decisions.

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Introduction

Many countries are reviewing their criteria for allocating special education resources to learners with special educational needs. There are several reasons for this. These include (a) concerns that existing criteria are driven by diagnostic categories rather than being needs-based, (b) concerns that resources are inequitably distributed and thus distort true choice of provisions for learners with special educational needs, and (c) a lack of consistency within countries regarding access to resources, with consequences for equity and planning considerations.

In New Zealand, criteria for accessing special education resources have not been systematically reviewed for many years. Some definitions are so outmoded that they are being ignored and replaced by local criteria, with all the variation and inconsistencies that such a flexible approach entails. A recently published report (Ministry of Education, 1994) noted that the current distribution of special education resources reflected historical decisions and that resources were not spread equitably through the country. As a consequence, students were being funded in very different ways in different parts of the country. To achieve a more consistent and fairer allocation of resources, it was recommended that the criteria for receiving special education resources should be reviewed and that a 3-5 year plan for the gradual redistribution of special education resources from a population to a needs base be developed.

In brief, the review of special education criteria - which was undertaken by the authors (Mitchell & Ryba, 1994) - recommended the adoption of a comprehensive, national framework for ascertaining students' education support needs arising from their physical, sensory[1], learning or behavioural attributes. It introduced the concept of five levels of education support needs, ranging from those which can normally be expected to be met by a regular school within its existing resources, through to those which require alternative programmes with high levels of additional specialised resources. A 'Needs Ascertainment Agreement' was used to identify these levels and to determine what education supports are required for individual students.

The remainder of this paper summarises the main recommendations of the review of special education criteria. Particular attention will be paid to the definition of students with education support needs, the notion of quality of life, the types of education supports currently in place in New Zealand, the recommended five levels of education support needs, factors to be taken into account in determiing what education supports should be provided, individual education plans and needs ascertainment agreements, and a detailed description one level of education support needs. The paper concludes with a comment on the current status of policy decisions arising from the review.

Students with Education Support Needs

Students with Education Support Needs were defined as those who have physical, sensory, learning or behavioural attributes that differ from the majority of their age mates and who require some adaptations to their educational programmes and/or the provision of different or additional resources. For many of these students, the additional support can be provided by their teachers and other school personnel. Some will require educational provisions additional to or in place of those usually provided in regular educational programmes.

It is common practice in New Zealand to equate special education with the provisions for students with disabilities or learning difficulties and to exclude students whose special needs arise solely from special abilities (giftedness) from its purview. The review worked within these parameters, but also recognised the importance of addressing the needs of students with special abilities who also have support needs arising from disabilities or learning difficulties. Also excluded from the definition were students whose language in which they are taught is different from that spoken in their homes.

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1 Since the original terms of reference of the review excluded students with sensory disabilities, these were not explicitly addressed. The model outlined in the review can, however, be readily extended to include such disabilities and this will take place in 1995.

The review noted that education support needs are present when students have difficulties, compared with the majority of students of their age, in one or more of the following:

- general cognitive functioning
- essential learning areas in the New Zealand Curriculum
- communication skills (including speech)
- social, emotional and cooperative behaviours
- work and leisure skills
- self management skills (including safety, community living and self care)
- physical skills (including gross motor, fine motor, balance and coordination)
- medical and health factors
- hearing
- vision

The review also noted that many students with education support needs will have care and therapeutic support needs, some or all of which are normally delivered by health or welfare agencies. These needs include the following:

- assistance with transport
- audiology services
- basic care assistance (e.g., toileting, eating, grooming, mobility)
- medical/health services (e.g., tube feeding, respiratory problems, catheterisation, insulin injections, drug therapies)
- occupational therapy
- physiotherapy
- psychiatric services
- social welfare services
- supervision to prevent injury to self and others.

Quality of life

In allocating resources to students with education support needs, the review asserted that the over-riding goal should be to provide sufficient support to enable such students to experience and to attain the best possible quality of life in the community and culture in which they live. According to writers such as Schalock (1993), this means providing opportunities during students' period of formal education for them to achieve maximum:

- independence/decision making: including making choices, controlling the environment, mobility skills, communication skills, and self care skills
- community integration: including full acceptance by their family, whanau and community
- satisfaction: including self esteem and sense of well-being
- productivity: including academic and vocational skills.

Education Supports

In meeting students' education support needs, it was noted that it may be necessary for one or more of the following education supports to be put in place:

- modifications to curriculum content
- modifications to teaching methods
- specialised or modified materials and equipment
- adaptations to classroom space and school buildings
- access to appropriate information technology
- access to specialised staff
- speech and language therapies
- intensive teaching support
- advice, guidance and support for parents/caregivers
- counselling
- professional development of staff.

The review noted that four broad types of education support currently exist in New Zealand. These range from those which can normally be expected of a school within its existing resources, through to alternative programmes with high levels of additional specialised resources:

- Type A education supports are those that the regular school provides within existing resources.
- Type B education supports are those that the regular school provides with advice, guidance and support from external consultants.
- Type C education supports are those that the regular school provides with advice, guidance and support from external consultants, supplemented by the services of resource teachers for children with special education needs or guidance teachers, and/or supplementary resources.
- Type D education supports are those that are provided in alternative programmes in integrated or non-integrated settings, with advice, guidance and support from external consultants. These programmes include special classes, experience classes, assessment classes, attached units and special day schools.

Determining Education Supports

In determining what type of education supports should be provided, the review recommended that the following factors should be considered:

- the support option selected should be the most likely of all available options to benefit the student by improving learning outcomes and enabling the achievement of quality of life goals.
- the focus should be on the nature of educational needs, and the supports required, rather than on a category of disability
- the student's education support needs should be ascertained by professionals from a range of disciplines appropriate to the student's needs, in consultation with the student's parents/caregivers and the student, if possible
- while available resources should be directed to students with the greatest level of need, all students with significant education support needs should have access to additional resources
- account should be taken of both the individual characteristics of the student and of the environment in which she or he is usually educated
- criteria for determining access to education support should be functional, culturally fair, gender neutral and lead to a process of ascertainment which is as economical as possible
- students of the same age and with the same education support needs should receive the same level of education support
- student's parents/caregivers should be able to exercise informed choice in the light of detailed and balanced information about all available educational options or combinations of options in their district
- there should be clear accountability lines, mechanisms for monitoring performance, and an independent and objective method of determining eligibility for education support.

Individual Education Plans and Needs Ascertainment Agreements

As in many countries, Individual Education Plans (IEPs) have been in use in New Zealand for some time. The review noted that they constitute a firm guide for the implementation of short term specific programmes and services and a basis for on-going evaluation and programme adjustments. It was recommended that IEPs should continue to be drawn up in a process involving the student's parents/caregivers, teachers and other persons who have a regular involvement in the student's education, care and therapy, in consultation with the student as far as possible. They should be drawn up at intervals no greater than 6 months apart, depending on the particular student's needs. Both education support needs and care and therapeutic

support needs should be taken into account. It was recommended that IEPs should have required elements and be drawn up in a standard manner across the country.

The review introduced the notion of a Needs Ascertainment Agreement (NAA), which would serve a similar function to the Statementsof Needs (England and Wales), the Record Of Needs (Scotland) and the Ascertainment (Queensland). The primary purpose of the NAA process would be to determine a student's level of educational support needs and care and therapeutic support needs, with a view to deciding what resources, including alternative programmes or combinations of programmes, will best contribute to maximising the achievement of his or her quality of life goals. In drawing up NAAs, both education support needs and care and therapeutic support needs should be taken into account.

NAAs should be drawn up in accordance with Section 9 of the Education Act 1989, which is an agreement between the Secretary of Education an the parents of a student deemed to require special education. They would be between the student's parents/caregivers and the Secretary of Education. They are prepared in consultation with the Special Education Service and the principal(s) of any school or combination of schools which is being considered for the student. Parents/caregivers should have the right to be represented by an advocate if they wish. Normal appeal procedures with arbitration to resolve disputes, as specified in the Education Act 1989, section 10, would apply. In addition, appropriate grievance procedures concerning NAAs should be developed. The Ministry of Education should ensure that all students who require an NAA are identified and provided with the requisite levels of support. In other words, an NAA should be seen as defining an entitlement for education support. NAAs should have a standard format, be drawn up in a standard manner across the country, and should be prepared within 3 months of a formal request by one or more of the parties to an NAA.

When NAAs are drawn up, IEPs should be developed at the same time and as part of the same process. NAAs and IEPs may be initiated by the student's parents/caregivers, or the principal of the school which the student attends, or the Secretary of Education.

IEPs and NAAs should draw upon:

- observations of the student in a range of environments
- information provided by the student's teacher(s)
- information provided by the student's parents/caregivers
- portfolios of the student's work
- information provided by the student
- specialist advice
- appropriate reliable and valid standardised tests

The review recommended that in drawing up IEPs and NAAs, the following principles should be adhered to:

- students with education support needs will be assessed through a process which is coordinated, culturally safe, flexible and responsive to the specific needs of students and their families/caregivers
- the assessment process will uphold the rights of students being assessed to informed decision making and independent expression as far as is possible, and will treat them with dignity and consideration
- the students family/caregivers will be respected for their knowledge and experience
- people undertaking assessment will be competent, knowledgeable about the support needs of students they assess, respectful of students with support needs and their family/caregivers
- people undertaking assessment will be knowledgeable about the cultural context in which the student is located and will involve informed people from that context in gathering information for assessment and programme planning
- students whose first language is Mäori should be assessed in that language

- parents/caregivers of students being assessed will have access to information arising from their child's assessment and their privacy and confidentiality will be safeguarded
- parents/caregivers may ask to have any assessment reviewed.
(Based on Ministry of Health, 1994)

Figure 1 summarises the main differences between NAAs and IEPs.

Figure 1. The main differences between NAAs and formal IEPs

Needs Ascertainment Agreements	Individual Education Plans
Used for students with Levels 3 (some), 4 and 5 Education Support Needs	Used for students with Levels 2, 3, 4 and 5 Education Support Needs
Emphasis on long-term education placements strategies	Emphasis on short-term education and objectives and strategies
Required for Section 9 placements and more than 1 SRU	Required for up to 1 SRU
Drawn up between parents, Secretary of Education, Boards of Trustees/ Committees of Management, in consultation with SES or agency nominated by Secretary, other relevant agencies, and student	Drawn up by school, relevant agencies/professionals, parents, and student with education support needs
Formally revised every 1-3 years, with annual reviews by principal in consultation with parents	Formally revised at least every 6 months
Integrated with formally ascertained care and therapeutic support needs	Integrated with care and therapeutic support needs

Levels of Education Support Needs

The review recommended that five broad levels of education support needs should be recognised. These levels relate to, but are not identical to, the types of education supports outlined above. The levels range from those which can normally be expected to be met by a regular school within its existing resources, through to those which require alternative programmes with high levels of additional specialised resources. In the following, reference will be made to 'Supplementary Resource Units' (SRUs); these refer to discretionary resources denominated in the monetary equivalent to one hour per week of additional teacher time.

Students with Level 1 Education Support Needs are those to whom the classroom teacher should normally be able to accommodate, either independently or with the advice, guidance and support provided by other personnel within the school, and in full consultation with the student's parents/caregivers.

At this level, the student's education support needs do not require modification to the regular curriculum content, but some adaptation to teaching methods or materials may be required.

To enable schools to meet their responsibilities for students at this level, it was recommended that each school should designate a staff member as an education support co-ordinator whose responsibilities would include:

- operating the school's policies on students with education support needs

- acting as the school's point of contact for parents/caregivers of students with education support needs
- advising the principal on the allocation of education support resources
- liaising with and advising fellow teachers
- identifying students with education support needs and maintaining a register of such students
- contributing to the professional development of staff
- liaising with external agencies

Such a person should have appropriate training or be provided with opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in guiding their colleagues to work with students with education support needs.

Schools should develop their own procedures for ensuring that teachers meet their obligations towards students with education support needs and for providing appropriate in-school support. Schools should maintain records of significant actions taken on behalf of identified students.

Students with Level 1 Education Support Needs would have their needs met by teachers whose teaching and classroom management methods are inclusive. Such teachers:

- recognise and respond to the diversity of students in their classrooms
- accommodate to their students' different styles and rates of learning by employing a range of teaching methods, including cooperative learning, peer tutoring, team teaching and individualised instruction
- are aware of the rights of students with educational support needs
- consult and develop partnership relationships with parents/caregivers and colleagues
- identify and overcome barriers to learning
- seek to enhance the self esteem of all students
- adapt their instruction to the prior knowledge and beliefs of their students
- appropriately organise the physical environment of the classroom
- use appropriate forms of assessment

School policies should reflect these professional issues, as well as the school's statutory obligations with respect to students with education support needs.

Students with Level 2 Education Support Needs do not require modification to the regular curriculum content, but some adaptation to teaching methods or materials may be required, with guidance on such matters being provided by external consultants.

These students comprise those who have not responded to the measures taken by the school in its Level 1 Support, as documented by the school, and for whom advice, guidance and support from external consultants has been determined to be necessary.

For the most part, the kinds of support provided by external consultants would include (a) screening students' support needs, (b) monitoring the progress of students whose education support needs had moved them into this level from another level, (c) providing advice and guidance to parents/caregivers, (d) improving liaison between the home and the school, and (e) advising the teacher and other school staff on adaptations to teaching methods or materials where the school's professional skills need supplementation.

As with Level 1, clear records should be kept for each student who receives Level 2 Support. These records would be taken into account in determining students' eligibility for Level 3 Support, if that is eventually sought.

Referrals for Level 2 Education Support may be made either by the principal of the school which the student is attending, or by the student's parents/caregivers.

The Education Support Coordinator would play an important role in coordinating the within-school supports and the advice, guidance and support provided by external consultants.

Students with Level 3 Education Support Needs do not require modification to the regular curriculum content, but some adaptation to teaching methods or materials may be required and the student will require occasional small group or individual support, with guidance on such matters being provided by external consultants.

Their education support needs can normally be expected to be met by the regular school, with advice, guidance and support from external consultants, and the services of resource teachers for children with special education needs and/or 1 Supplementary Resource Units (SRUs).

In making decisions as to whether a student is eligible for Level 3 Education Support, an IEP process is used for making application for supplementary resources alone and an NAA for obtaining access to the services of resource teachers.

Referrals for Level 3 Education Support may be made by the principal of the school which the student is attending, or by the student's parents/caregivers, or by the Secretary of Education .

Level 3 Education Support is reviewed every 2 years in the case of resource teacher and guidance teacher support, and every 6 months in the case of supplementary resources.

Students with Level 4 Education Support Needs are those who require some modification to the regular curriculum content, some adaptations to teaching methods or materials, and occasional small group or individual support, with advice, guidance and support on such matters being provided by external consultants. These students' needs can normally be met in:

(a) the regular school with the services of resource teachers for children with special education needs and/or up to 3 SRUs; *or*
(b) an alternative programme such as a special class, *or*
(c) a combination of (a) and (b).

In making decisions as to whether a student has Level 4 Education Support Needs, an NAA process is used. IEPs are used for programme planning. In the case of students with clearly identified Level 4 Education Support Needs, where there is a considerable amount of information available from health and education agencies, an NAA may be drawn up immediately the student comes to the notice of a school or an education agency. In other words, a case could be made for not requiring evidence of the student not responding to Levels 1, 2 and 3 Supports before being considered for eligibility for Level 4 Support.

Referrals for Level 4 Education Support may be made by the principal of the school which the student is attending, or by the student's parents/caregivers, or by the Secretary of Education. Level 4 Education Support in the form of resource teacher and guidance teacher support is reviewed every year for children under 7 years of age and every 2 years for older students, and every 6 months in the case of supplementary resources.

Students with Level 5 Education Support Needs are those who require extensive modification to the regular curriculum content, major adaptations to teaching methods or materials, and small group or individual support for the entire school day, with advice, guidance and support on such matters being provided by external consultants. These students' needs can normally be met in:

(a) the regular school with advice, guidance and support from external consultants, and the services of resource teachers and/or up to 4 or more SRUs; *or*
(b) an alternative programme such as an attached unit in a regular school, or a special day school , *or*
(c) a combination of (a) and (b).

In making decisions as to whether a student has Level 5 Education Support Needs, an NAA process is used. IEPs are used for programme planning.

In the case of students with clearly identified education Level 5 Education Support Needs, where there is a considerable amount of information available from health and education agencies, an NAA may be drawn up immediately the student comes to the notice of a school or an education agency. In other words, a case could be made for not requiring evidence of the student not responding to Levels 1, 2, 3 or 4 Supports before being considered for eligibility for Level 5 Support.

Referrals for Level 5 Education Support may be made by the principal of the school which the student is attending, or by the student's parents/caregivers, or by the Secretary of Education (or nominee). Level 5 Education Support is reviewed every year for children under 7 years of age and every 3 years for older students.

The above five levels of education support needs are summarised in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Summary of levels 1 - 5 education support needs

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
	Ed Sup Needs	Ed Sup Needs	Ed Sup Needs	Ed Sup Needs	Ed Sup Needs
Content of curriculum	No modifications	No modifications	Minor modifications	Some modifications	Major modifications
Teaching methods and materials	Normal adaptations	Minor adaptations	Some adaptations	Significant adaptations	Major adaptations
Small group and individual support	Normal support	Normal support	Occasional support	Frequent support	Continuous support

It is estimated that 1 1/2 to 2% of the school-age population would fall within Levels 4 - 5 Education Support Needs. Another 10-15% would fall within Levels 1 and 3 Education Support Needs.

A Categorical vs Non-categorical Approach

As noted earlier, the review was required to provide criteria related to three broad categories of special needs - learning difficulties, physical disabilities and behaviour difficulties. Since the terms of reference excluded sensory disabilities, these categories were not considered; it is expected that the model will be extended in 1995 to include such students. Although the criteria have been grouped in such a way as to define profiles for the three (and eventually five) major categories of students with special educational needs, it would be possible to use them in a more functional, non-categorical, way. This would simply involve focusing on an individual student's performances on the eight (and eventually ten) behavioural domains, rather than on the pre-determined domain profiles that define particular disabilities.

Figure 3 presents a matrix of the five levels in the ten behavioural domains.

	Cognitive Skills	Essential Learning Areas	Communic-ation Skills	Social, Emotional & Cooperative Behaviours	Work & Leisure Skills	Self Management Skills	Physical Skills	Medical & Health Factors	Vision (criteria to be developed)	Hearing (criteria to be developed)
Level 1										
Level 2										
Level 3 LD PD BD HD VI	**	*	*	* § (1 of 2)	*	* §	* (1 of 3) #	 # §		
Level 4 LD PD BD HD VI	**	*	*	* § (1 of 2)	*	* # §	* (1 of 3) # (1 of 3)	* # §		
Level 5 LD PD BD HD VI	**	*	*	* § (1 of 2)	*	* # §	* (1 of 3) # (1 of 3)	* # §		

** Necessary condition for Education Support at this level
* At least 2 required in addition to the necessary condition for Education Support at this level
# At least 2 required for Education Support at this level
§ At least 1 required for Education Support at this level
LD Learning Difficulties
PD Physical Disabilities
BD Behaviour Difficulties
HD Hearing Disabilities (criteria to be developed)
VI Visual Impairments (criteria to be developed)

Figure 3. Matrix of skills and levels of support needs.

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Students With Level 5 Education Support Needs

In order to illustrate the operation of the principles outlined above, material relating to Level 5 Education Support Needs will be described in more detail. In general, student's with Level 5 Education Support Needs require major modifications to the regular curriculum content, major adaptations to teaching methods or materials and continuous small group or individual support, with guidance on such matters being provided by external consultants. It should be noted that areas of functioning in which a student may have support needs often coexist with absolute or relative strengths in other areas. Programme planning must take account of this within-individual variation. Before a student is classified as having Level 5 Education Support Needs, there should be documented evidence that any supports provided at a lower level have been inadequate to meet his or her education support needs.

Level 5 Learning Difficulties. Student's with Level 5 Education Support Needs arising from learning difficulties have a cognitive functioning level up to half that expected for students of the same age. The majority of students at this level will have additional support needs arising from associated sensory disabilities, physical disabilities and medical conditions. These students are frequently described in the literature as having 'moderate to profound intellectual disabilities/ intellectual handicap/ mental retardation'. Many of them are described as being 'multi handicapped'. Some of these students will have autism as their primary education support need. In the case of students with multiple support needs, the major support need should guide the decision as to which category the child is eligible for.

To be considered for Level 5 Support arising from learning difficulties, evidence is required regarding the student's overall level of cognitive functioning and there should also be evidence of similar levels of functioning in two or more of the following: essential learning areas in the New Zealand Curriculum, language and communication, social behaviours, emotional behaviours, pre-vocational skills (intermediate and secondary age students), leisure, safety, community living, self care, physical skills, and autism. Some of these will draw upon care and therapy support to a greater or lesser extent.

Level 5 Physical Disabilities. Student's with Level 5 Education Support Needs arising from physical disabilities have restrictions in motor functioning that prevent them from fully participating in the day-to-day learning activities of the school. They require major modifications to their learning environments and continuous personal assistance in any setting. Many will require continuous access to specialised equipment, including wheelchairs and assistive technology, to facilitate or inhibit movement, support posture, and aid independence in motor tasks across all areas of the curriculum. Many students at this level will have additional education support needs resulted from associated sensory disabilities, cognitive delays, and behavioural difficulties. Most will require regular specialist consultation and support from physiotherapists, occupational therapists, physicians, and other health professionals. Some students will require frequent care and therapeutic support due to their chronic medical conditions and frequent physical management such as positioning, transferring, and carrying. These students are frequently described in the literature as having 'severe/profound physical handicaps/disabilities'.

To be considered for Level 5 Support arising from physical disabilities, evidence is required that the student has Level 5 Education Support Needs in two or more of the following: gross motor skills, fine motor skills, balance and coordination skills, self care skills, medical and health factors.

Level 5 Behaviour Difficulties. Student's with Level 5 Education Support Needs arising from behaviour difficulties have social and/or emotional behaviours of an extreme kind which significantly interfere with their social acceptance, sense of personal well-being and their educational performance Many will require regular consultation and support from specialists such as counsellors, psychiatrists, and clinical psychologists. Many students with Level 5 behaviour difficulties seriously disrupt the education of other students. A few will require care and therapeutic support needs due to associated medical conditions. These students are

frequently described in the literature as having 'severe emotional disorders/ emotional maladjustment/ behaviour disorders/ social maladjustment'.

To be considered for Level 5 Support arising from behaviour difficulties, evidence is required that the student has Level 5 Education Support Needs in one or more of the following: social, emotional, safety, and autism.

LEVEL 5 EDUCATION SUPPORT NEEDS

Key
LD## = Learning Difficulties: necessary condition; LD# = Learning Difficulties: at least 2 required in addition to necessary condition for consideration for Level 5 Support
PD¥ = Physical Disabilities: at least 2 required for consideration for Level 5 Support
BD§ = Behaviour Difficulties: at least 1 required for consideration for Level 5 Support
* = Requires care and therapy support alone or in addition to education support

COGNITIVE SKILLS: LEVEL 5		
Education Support Needs	**Ascertainment Procedure**	**Required**
General cognitive functioning		
Major adjustment to total curriculum content, major adaptations to teaching methods, continuous small group/individual support.	Teacher observations, developmental scales etc. administered by psychologist show global cognitive functioning up to half that of age mates.	LD ##

ESSENTIAL LEARNING AREAS: LEVEL 5		
Education Support Needs	**Ascertainment Procedure**	**Required**
Essential learning areas in New Zealand Curriculum		
All of essential learning areas in New Zealand Curriculum require major modifications. Continuous individual or small group instruction to develop functional academic skills.	Teacher data on performance in, or ability to cope with, New Zealand Curriculum shows student is achieving at a level achieved by students half their age or less in all essential learning areas (Language and Languages, The Arts, Science, Mathematics, Technology, Social Sciences, Health and Physical Well-being).	LD#

COMMUNICATION SKILLS: LEVEL 5		
Education Support Needs	**Ascertainment Procedure**	**Required**
Language and communication		
Ongoing assessment and programme planning by speech language therapist to develop verbal language or alternative forms of communication. Regular access to specialised equipment (including augmentative communication technology).	Speech language therapist's data show communication skills ranging from restricted use of language to lack of awareness of functional use of communication.	LD#
Speech		
Frequent support from speech language therapist with articulation, voice and fluency. Regular access to specialised equipment (including augmentative communication technology).	Speech language therapist's data show major needs in articulation, voice and fluency, or speech is severely limited or unintelligible.	

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND COOPERATIVE BEHAVIOURS: LEVEL 5		
Education Support Needs	**Ascertainment Procedure**	**Required**
Social		
Frequent individual or small group activities to facilitate social and interpersonal skills and to promote friendship development. Regular access to personal counselling/ family counselling.	Observations, developmental scales/ checklists/ adaptive behaviour scales/ reports from teachers and relevant specialists show one or more of the following to an extreme degree: limited social skills, withdrawal, aggression/violent behaviour, disruptiveness, destructiveness, difficulties in developing and sustaining friendships.	LD# BD§
*Emotional**		
Individual or small group support to assist building appropriate emotions and means of expressing them. Regular access to personal counselling/ family counselling/ psychotherapy/ psychiatric treatment/ clinical psychologist treatment	Observations by psychologists, teachers and others in student's environment show student frequently has one or more of: inappropriate emotions in normal circumstances, generally pervasive moods of unhappiness or depression, suicidal attitudes, school refusal, obsessional eating habits, which interfere significantly with student's educational performance. Includes students who exhibit a very limited range of emotions beyond response to discomfort and hunger (normally reflected in low levels of cognitive functioning).	LD# BD§

WORK AND LEISURE SKILLS: LEVEL 5		
Education Support Needs	**Ascertainment Procedure**	**Required**
Pre-vocational (intermediate and secondary age students)		
Individual instruction to train employment-related skills, including occupation- specific skills and social-vocational skills. Work experience (on and off campus) and transition to full or part time work (sheltered, supported or competitive).	Observations, developmental scales/checklists, adaptive behaviour scales show limited range of specific occupational and social-vocational skills relevant to occupations likely to be available to students when they leave school. These include following directions, relating to workmates, attendance and punctuality, handling criticism, maintaining accuracy and speed, care of equipment.	LD#
Leisure		
Individual and small group instruction to access and engage in recreation activities at school and in community.	Observations, developmental scales/checklists/ adaptive behaviour scales show limited participation in leisure activities engaged in by most age-mates.	LD#

SELF MANAGEMENT SKILLS: LEVEL 5		
Education Support Needs	**Ascertainment Procedure**	**Required**
*Safety**		
Close supervision to prevent injury to self or others. Totally supervised transport.	Observations, developmental scales/checklists/ adaptive behaviour scales show student poses a major risk to the safety of self or others.	LD# BD§
Community living		
Continuous supervision required in most aspects of community living and intensive training in basic skills is required.	Observations, developmental scales/checklists/ adaptive behaviour scales indicate little likelihood of student living independently in the community.	LD#
*Self care**		
Individual support for most self care areas of eating, drinking, dressing, grooming, bathing and toileting several times daily.	Observations, developmental scales/checklists adaptive behaviour scales show incontinence, restricted ability to feed and dress oneself.	LD#

PHYSICAL SKILLS: LEVEL 5		
Education Support Needs	**Ascertainment Procedure**	**Required**
*Gross motor skills**		LD# one of following
Continuous individual support with locomotor skills Specialised equipment (including wheelchairs and assistive technology) for movement. Regular physiotherapy. Extensive modifications to school buildings and classroom space.	Reports from specialists such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists and accredited assessors show major difficulties in physically accessing learning environments inside and outside the classroom.	PD¥
*Fine motor skills**		
Continuous individual or small group support to facilitate fine motor control. Specialised equipment (including assistive technology) for fine motor manipulation. Regular occupational therapy and/or physiotherapy.	Reports from specialists such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists and accredited assessors show major difficulties in manipulative, visual perceptual and tactile skills (e.g., grasping, turning, twisting, writing/ recording).	PD¥
*Balance and coordination skills**		
Continuous individual or small group support to facilitate balance and coordination. Specialised equipment (including assistive technology) for balance and coordination. Regular physiotherapy.	Reports from specialists such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists and accredited assessors show major difficulties in most or all activities calling upon balance and coordination (e.g., sitting, standing, kneeling, jumping).	PD¥

MEDICAL AND OTHER FACTORS: LEVEL 5		
Education Support Needs	**Ascertainment Procedure**	**Required**
*Medical and health**		
Regular individual assistance with specialised medical needs (e.g., tube feeding, respiratory problems, catheterisation, drug therapies). Regular monitoring of medical condition by trained personnel.	Reports from medical specialists describe presence of conditions which are potentially life-threatening and which require regular surveillance and/or a protective environment.	PD¥
*Autism**		
Continuous support to ameliorate emotional and social aspects of autism.	Reports from medical and psychological specialists indicate presence of most or all of the following autistic behaviours: stereotypic and repetitive mannerisms, bizarre behaviours, eccentric habits, extreme social isolation, impaired reciprocal social interactions.	LD# BD§

Policy Developments

At the time of writing (April 1995), the Ministry of Education has sought comments on the proposed model and initiated field trials of the criteria as outlined in this paper. As well, the Minister of Education has set up a National Advisory Committee on Special Education, which is charged with the task of finalising the text of special education policy guidelines, providing an independent perspective on the evaluation of the eligibility criteria for special education resourcing and its allocation with a view to national implementation by the end of 1996, and considering the specific needs of those in the early childhood sector. The senior author is a member of this committee.

Conclusion

This paper reports on a new approach to determining special education placements and resourcing, which the authors have recently recommended to the New Zealand Ministry of Education. The review was undertaken at the request of the Ministry because of the growing realisation that existing criteria were so out of date that they were no longer being observed. This has led to locally defined criteria, with the consequent variability leading to difficulties in national planning and a lack of equity in accessing scarce special education resources.

The concern was to develop a model for determining ways in which education support services could be provided in an equitable, effective and economic manner. To accomplish this objective, the authors recommended procedures in which individual students' education support needs be determined with clarity and consistency through a needs ascertainment procedure. This procedure focuses on students' functioning level and their education support requirements, with the aim of ensuring that adaptations be made wherever possible in regular education settings.

The criteria for determining students' education support needs are robust enough to provide a best practice basis for rationalising current procedures, which are still largely based on disability categories. Importantly, however, they can form the basis for shifting the emphasis away from disability categories to providing descriptors for support needs in functional skill domains.

New Zealand's Education Act 1989 requires that all children with special educational needs have the same right to enrol and receive education at government schools as other children. The Act does not, however, require that all students be included in regular classrooms. Rightly or wrongly, New Zealand parents may elect a non-integrated setting, even though there may be important educational reasons for inclusion. Within this context, the authors allowed for the maximum degree of choice of location and type of education supports for children with education support needs. Inclusive education is thus facilitated, but not forced.

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